The Myrtle

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

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Winter.

HEAP high the faggots, the farmer cries,
There's promise of snow in the darkening skies,
There's a voiceless wail in the forest's shade,
And the wind-spires call from the rocky glade.

The brook, by the Winter-king's device,
Is set in a jewelled band of ice,
And soon the earth in white will stand,
Like a gem-decked bride from fairy-land.

As the winter's snow, and the winter's cold,
Will give back blessings a thousand fold,
So, in many a sorrowing heart there lies,
Thoughts that anon will reach the skies.

Happy the soul that has wandered long
In realms of thought and realms of song,
For labor is gladness, and study, joy,
And the gold of knowledge without alloy.

Would wealth of wisdom your soul delight?
Would you crave your name on mountain-hight?
Then follow Truth, as she leads the way
Where clouds of myst'ry are rolled away.

Write on your banner, "Upward still"—
Though winds blow fair, or winds blow chill
Upward and onward, day by day,
With deathless purpose take your way.

Plant good seed for coming time,
And make your mission in life sublime—
Like the Jews, who fled from Egypt's night,
Let the fiery pillar be your light.

Life's a journey, and storms abound,
But after the tempest, peace is found.
Life's a journey, and clouds must rise,
But rest will be sweet in Paradise.

Mrs. M. M. B. Goodwin.—Little Sower.

Jesus Loves the Cheerful Giver.

JESUS loves the cheerful giver,
Though our mite be very small;
He accepts the willing spirit,
Not the wealth we bring at all.

For the Myrtle.

The Story of Mother Michel and her Cat.

FROM THE FRENCH.

CHAPTER III.

In which is shown the goodness of mother Michel and the wickedness of father Lustucru.

MOTHER Michel, worthy of the confidence which had been placed in her, was very kind to Monmouth; she took such good care of him, that he became the most beautiful cat in the neighborhood, where there were some very splendid cats. She never allowed him to go out of her sight, gave him the nicest meats to eat, and a bed of the softest down. One day, thinking that Monmouth did not seem very well, she wished to know about every sickness that cats are likely to have, so she got different works upon this subject, and even went as far as to read the "History of Cats," written by Francis Augustus Paradise.

But mother Michel did not do all this, because she wanted the money which the countess would give her. She thought but little of herself, good old woman! content with little, she always had enough to live on; she desired only a small chamber, a bit of bread, some wood for winter, and a spinning wheel with which to spin; but she had some nephews and nieces for whom she had hoped to do something, it was to them that she determined to give the gift of the countess.

The happiness of Monmouth made father Lustucru very angry, he could not bear to think of the time when mother Michel would receive her reward, so he determined to find some way to rob her of her cat, and thus bring upon her the anger of their mistress, and prevent her from getting the promised reward.

"How," said he, to himself, "shall I get rid of this miserable cat! Shall I burn, or poison, or drown him? I will drown him."

But how should he carry out this resolution? It was hard to get hold of Monmouth, for he was always with mother Michel, and he could not go near father Lustucru, he disliked him so much. But one evening Monmouth, who had finished his supper, was stretched out, sound asleep, near the fire in the dining room, at mother Michel's feet; the door opened softly, and in walked father Lustucru. "Good!" said he to himself, "the cat is asleep! now I must get mother Michel out of the way."

"How kind of you to come to keep me company!" said mother Michel, "How do you do this evening?"

"I am very well, but every one is not as fortunate as I am; our porter is very sick, he suffers very much from rheumatism and would be very happy to see you a moment. You have good words to console him and excellent receipts to ease his pain; go then, and make our friend a short visit; I know that you will do him good."

Mother Michel rose immediately and went down to the porter, who was sick with rheumatism.

"Now I'll have the cat!" cried father Lustucru.

He went into the entry with the steps of a wolf, walking upon the tips of his toes, and took a covered basket, which he had hid in the bottom of a closet. Then he came back after Monmouth, whom he seized rudely by the neck. The poor thing woke and found himself face to face with father Lustucru. He wished to cry out, to call for help, but he had no time. The wicked man plunged him into the basket, shut down the cover, went quickly down the staircase, with haggard eyes, his hair standing on end, like a man who is about to commit a crime.

It was a beautiful night in February; the sky was clear, the air keen and cool; the moon shone out brightly, but once in a while, large clouds hid his face so that it could not be seen. Father Lustucru had to cross the garden belonging to the house, in order to go out by a little gate, of which he had the key. He glided from wall to wall, taking care to follow the path only at times when the darkness favored him. He had just opened the gate when he heard outside, a loud noise of steps and voices; he trembled, and stood still and listened.

"What foolishness," said he, after a moment or two, "it is only some one passing on the street." He waited till they had gone by, then he hurried outside the gate; as soon as he was upon the wharf, he began to whistle and dance, he was so glad that he could now get rid of Monmouth.

He went up the river Seine as far as the bridge of Notre Dame, stopped in the middle of it, held the basket over the parapet, rudely turned it upside down, and threw the unhappy Monmouth into the icy waters of the river. The cat in trying to escape uttered a cry which sounded like that of a child. Father Lustucru shuddered when he heard it, but he soon got over his fears, and, putting his hands in his pockets, he said in a scornful tone; "A pleasant voyage, dear Monmouth, I hope you will reach a good port! But now I think of it," he added, "cats know how to swim! Bah! it is a pretty good distance though, from this bridge to the next one."

Comforted by these thoughts, father Lustucru went on his way, entered the garden gate, went carefully into his chamber and waited to enjoy mother Michel's sorrow, when she should find out that her cat was gone. Mother Michel had been kept by the porter, but she came away to give her cat a cup of sweetened milk which she served to him every evening. She went into the dining room calmly and leisurely, not thinking that any thing had happened to him.

When she no longer saw Monmouth in the place which he had occupied, she thought that he was hiding behind the sofa cushions; she sought above and below, looked under all the furniture, and ran into the hall and called: "Monmouth! Monmouth!"

"He does not answer me," she said, "but when I went down father Lustucru was here; perhaps he will be able to give me some news of him. She knocked immediately at his door; he made believe that he had just woke from a sound sleep, and asked in a rude voice what she wanted of him.

"Is Monmouth here?"

"Does your cat ever come to me? You know that he does not like me."

"Alas! where is he? I left him in the dining room near the fire, and now I cannot find him."

"Can it be lost?" said father Lustucru feigning the greatest anxiety.

"Lost! oh no, it is impossible! he is in some part of the house."

"We must search for him," said the rogue gravely, "we must search for him this instant; Monmouth is a precious cat, who well deserves that we should rouse the servants up for him."

All the servants in the house were sent to search for Monmouth; each one armed himself with a torch, and they looked in every nook and corner from cellar to garret, from yard to garden. Father Lustucru carried out the search with great zeal. But they had looked for him in vain and mother Michel over come by sorrow and fatigue, threw herself into an easy chair.

"Alas!" said she. "I left him only an instant, and that was to do a kind act."

"I begin to believe that your cat is really lost," replied father Lustucru, in a severe tone; "it is a great misfortune for you! What will the countess say when she returns? She will punish you in some way!"

"Punish me!" said mother Michel rising to her full hight; then she sank down again; for her face was pale, her eyes fixed, she had fainted away.

Father Lustucru looked at her with an evil look, without feeling the least sorrow; he laughed scornfully.

M. C. Schouler.

Little Chatterbox.

THEY call me "Little Catterbox"—
My name is little May;
I have to talk so much, because
I have so much to say.

And oh! I have so many friends—
So many! and you see
I can't help loving them, because
They every one love me.

I love papa and my mamma—
I love my sisters, too;
And if you're very, very good,
I guess that I'll love you.

But I love God the best of all—
He keeps me all the night;
And when the morning comes again,
He wakes me with the light.

I think it is so nice to live;
And yet if I should die,
The Lord would send His angels down
To take me to the sky.

Heavenly Recognition.

A little girl in a family of my acquaintance—a lovely and precious child—lost her mother at an age too early to fix the loved features in her remembrance. She was beautiful; and as the bud of her heart unfolded it seemed as if won by that mother's prayer to turn instinctively heavenward.

The sweet, conscientious, and prayer-loving child was the idol of the bereaved family; but she faded away early. She would lie upon the lap of the friend who took a mother's kind care of her, and winding one wasted arm about her neck, would say, "Now tell me about mamma!" And when the oft-told tale had been repeated, she would ask softly, "Take me into the parlor, I want to see my mamma. The request was never refused, and the affectionate sick child would lie for hours gazing on her mother's portrait. But

"Pale and wan she grew, and weakly—
Bearing all her pains so meekly
That to them she still grew dearer,
As the trial hour drew nearer."

That hour came at last, and the weeping neighbors assembled to see the little child die. The dew of death was already in the flower, as its life-sun was going down. The little chest heaved faintly, spasmodically.

"Do you know me, darling?" sobbed close in her ear the voice that was dearest; but it awoke no answer. All at once a brightness, as if from the upper world, burst over the child's colorless countenence. The eyelids flashed open and the lips parted; the wan, curdling hands flew up in the little one's last impulsive effort, as she looked piercingly into the far above.

"Mother!" she cried, with surprise and transport in her tone, and passed with that breath to her mother's bosom.

A LITTLE girl about nine years old, the daughter of a clergyman, was visiting in a family where the father did not pray, but was in the habit of reading a chapter in the Bible with his family. At night, when he had read the chapter, the little girl knelt down as she had been in the habit of doing. The father saw the child on her knees and knelt himself. The rest of the family followed, and soon that father prayed for the first time in his family. That little girl was the instrument of the family prayer.

The Modern School-Girl.

"WHAT do we go to school for?"
I really must think awhile.
All through the long school-hours
We whisper, we laugh, we smile;

We write little notes to each other;
At recess we stand and chat;
But what we come to school for—
I suppose it isn't just that.

"What do *I* go to school for?"
To have some fun, to be sure,
To give the poor old teacher
As much as he can endure.

But what the rest go to school for,
I don't know, I confess.
Your conumdrum's too hard altogether
For a little girl to guess. *Our Young Folks.*

Making Tracks.

A light snow had fallen, and the boys desired to make the most of it. It was too dry for snowballing and not deep enough for coasting; but it did very well to make tracks in. There was a large meadow near the place where they were assembled. It was proposed that they should go to a tree which stood near the centre of the meadow, and that each one should start from it and see who could make the straightest track. The proposition was assented to, and they were soon at the tree. They ranged themselves around it, with their backs toward the trunk. If each had gone forward in a straight line, the paths would have been like the spokes of a wheel, the tree representing the hub.

"Whose is the straightest?" said James Allison to Thomas Sanders, who was at the tree first.

"Henry Armstrong's is the only one that is straight at all."

"How could we all contrive to go so crookedly when the ground is so smooth and nothing to turn us out of the way?" said Jacob Small.

"How happened you to go so straight, Henry?" said Thomas.

"I fixed my eye on that tall pine tree on the hill yonder, and never looked away from it till I reached the fence."

"I went as straight as I could without looking at anything but the ground," said James.

"So did I," said another.

"So did I," said several others.

It appeared that nobody but Henry had aimed at a particular object. They attempted to go straight without any definite aim. They failed. We cannot succeed in anything good without a definite aim. General purposes, general resolutions, will not avail. You must do as Henry did—fix upon something distinct and definite as an object and go steadily forward to it.

If you put a hot coal in your pocket, it will burn its way out. And so a bad action you are trying to hide will make itself known. A fault concealed is a fault doubled; and so you will find out all the way through life. Never hide your faults.

For the Myrtle.

The Little Comforter.

ETTA had lost her mother. Suddenly after a brief illness she died, and the loss was so new and strange it seemed as if some one had struck them a stunning blow.

That last evening seemed like a dream to Etta. The confusion of doctors and nurses and much preparing of medicines; the stillness about her mother's room from which they were kept away until they were called to hear her last words. Then the coming in of kind neighbors, and the quiet putting of the room where she lay into the sad order of death. Not until she looked upon her mother's face in its still white sleep, could Etta realize that her mother was indeed gone.

A sad strange evening. Etta wandered from room to room weeping, now alone, now with her friends, until she was too sick and exhausted to weep more. In the morning it was scarcely better. She woke afresh to her great sorrow.

Every thing reminded her of her mother; everything said, "you have a mother no more."

They tried to soothe her and say comforting words to her. They assured her she would be taken care of. But that only reminded her that no mother would do it. They talked to her of her mother in heaven, but that could not yet be a comfort to Etta. She wanted her mother here, on the earth. All the kindly meant words only said to her over and over "Your mother is gone; you will never have your mother again."

At last her little friend Ruthie came in, her merry little playmate, who never knew what it was to have a sorrow. She found Etta struggling and choking to keep back her tears, and went straight up to her as if an angel had sent her, and threw her arms about her neck and patted her on the cheek and said, "you *may* cry, Etta,—I'm so sorry for you,"—and began to cry.

That was the comfort Etta needed, the comfort of sympathy. "I'm so sorry for you." The words were simple, but they touched and soothed the heart as nothing else had done. Her great trouble was easier to bear if little Ruthie was sorry for her. It was the genuine Scripture way of comfort, "Weep with those that weep."

A little word in kindness spoken,
A motion, or a tear,
Will often heal a heart that's broken,
And show a friend sincere. *H. A. B.*

The Fisherman's Son.

A gentleman, walking on the beach, came across a little boy sitting on the shore all by himself, looking out on the great ocean.

"You like the sea, my boy, do you not?"

"Yes, sir; and I hope to follow it when I get bigger."

"It is a hard life, besides being dangerous," said the gentleman.

"Yes, sir; but Jesus Christ went to sea, and he knows the dangers; and sometimes he preached out of a ship. I am sure he loves sailors."

"But that will not hinder you from meeting with storms, and perhaps getting shipwrecked."

"Jesus Christ rules the winds and the waves. He stopped a storm once."

"He does not now," said the gentleman.

"No, sir; but if we hold on to him, nothing can much harm us," said the boy.

"You might be drowned."

"Yes, sir." The boy stopped. "But my soul would fly up to God; and it is fair weather there."

"You are quite a preacher," said the gentleman.

The Christ-Child.

COME hither, little children!
Draw closer 'round my knee,
For one brief moment silence
Your noisy shouts of glee;
And gazing on your faces,
So blithesome and so gay,
I'll tell you what once happened
Upon a Christmas day.

In a far distant country,
On such another morn,
In a stable rough and cheerless,
A little child was born.
There were no costly trappings
As in some lordly hall,
But sturdy beasts of burden
Stood each within its stall.

The gentle, patient cattle,
With eyes so calm and mild,
Gazed with half-human glances
Upon the little child.
No servant bent above him,
No vassal hailed his birth,
And yet no prince so mighty
E'er lived upon the earth!

No purple and fine linen,
No royal robes he had;
But in the coarsest garments
His tender form was clad.
The one whose birth the prophets,
Judea's seers, foresaw,
Was laid within a manger,
Upon the oaten straw.

But there was great rejoicing
Upon that early morn—
The angels sang in heaven
The hour the child was born.
And shepherds in the valley,
Who watched the whole night long,
Saw in the blazing heavens
The joyous angel throng.

They heard the angel-chorus,
And thus the carol ran;
"Now glory in the highest,
On earth be peace to man!
To man is born a Saviour,
To earth is born her King,
Hosannah in the highest
To Christ the Lord we bring!

And now to-day, O children,
No name so great we know
As that which angels chorused
The morn so long ago.
We keep this day rejoicing
With thankful hearts for aye;
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas day!

"I have always considered rather what is said than who says it; and the consequences of the argument rather than the consequence of him who delivers it."

Christmas in our Sunday Schools.

Since we have begun the Christmas record we are bound to give the whole story as fast and far as we hear it, if it takes the rest of the winter; but we will make our record as brief as possible. One happy occasion yet unspoken of in

MASSACHUSETTS

Is at Lowell 2d parish, where gifts were the order of the day. The superintendent was presented with a fine easy chair, the chorister with a parlor table and a Rogers group, the pastor with roll of greenbacks. Mrs. Isaac Place presented the parish with a fine copy of the Oxford pulpit Bible, as memento of the anniversary of her husband's death.

MAINE.

—The Sunday School at Kenduskeag held its usual festival. Christmas trees were bountifully loaded and all voted the occasion a "good time."

—The pastor at Orono writes: "Christmas with us was a joyful occasion. Our people determined to have a Christmas tree and evening service and entertainment. Accordingly the church was decorated, conspicious in which was the fine evergreen cross and luminous star of the East, and motto. The young people availed themselves of the Christmas fairy piece in the *Helper* which with the dialogues and other pieces were well rendered, and highly satisfactory to the large audience which filled the church even to the aisles and vestibule. The tree was literally loaded with presents among which was a roll of bills for the pastor's wife. So enjoyable an occasion has not been often experienced and for which we stand indebted mostly to the ladies of our Sunday School; to Santa Claus (we had a genuine one) and the *Helper*. This last (the paper) is much improved and now we have it we could hardly do without it.

NEW HAMPSHIRE.

—Christmas was duly observed by our people in Marlboro. The annual opening service was followed by a Sunday School Concert. Then came the distribution of presents from three trees. Friends of the Congregational church had put their presents on the trees. The church was beautifully trimmed with evergreens and flowers in festoons and wreaths. The house would not seat the audience, many having to stand. It was the unanimous decision that it was a very happy occasion.

—A novel Christmas present Mr. N. White gave to the Concord Sunday School, in the shape of a grand sleigh ride. The whole school went, accompanied by the teachers, and tested the four large sleighs to their utmost capacity, and a pleasanter afternoon is rarely spent than the little folks enjoyed on that delightful day. This Sunday School has a large addition to its library, the fruit of a Sunday's preaching on the subject by the pastor.

VERMONT.

—We have spoken of the celebration at St Johnsbury. Christmas was also happily observed at Springfield where the superintendent was presented by the pastor with a beautiful Chromo, the gift of his teachers. At Brattleboro the celebration was postponed to New Years, when the pastor and wife were handsomely remembered in their new housekeeping by both parish and school, who left as tokens of their visit, a fur overcoat, and a roll of greenbacks.

—At Woodstock, the pastor and wife were also remembered with a silver tea-service among many valuable gifts to and from the Sunday School. A Union Christmas service was held, in which all denominations joined.

—Christmas eve was celebrated at Waitsfield. The church was beautifully trimmed with evergreen and brilliantly illuminated, making a fine appearance. A sermon was delivered by Rev. J. Gregory, assisted by Rev. W. H. Walbridge. After this came dialogues and select pieces by the Sunday School children, performed in a creditable manner. Two large trees were filled with presents, for both old and young, in the usual way, giving great satisfaction to all present.

CONNECTICUT.

—The Sunday School at New Haven, enjoyed its annual Christmas tree on Wednesday evening. The Mission of the Fairies has been successfully performed by members of this parish at the Temple of Music, and Miss Ellen E. Miles deserves great credit for training the performers. The music, under charge of Miss Martha J. Foster was very fine.

OHIO.

—The West has not given us so full returns of Christmas, but we have good news from Ohio. At Cincinnati, Rev. J. G. Addams' church had a pleasant festival on the 26th, entirely devoted to the little folks. This School is increasing every Sunday.

—At McConnelsville the evening was celebrated at the church with an overflowing audience, Christmas tree and other adjuncts of a happy festival.

—At Middleport a pleasant festival was held with the tree, which bore generous fruit for the pastor and wife, also a handsome purse of greenbacks for the faithful organist, Miss Lillie Waterman.

DEAR MYRTLE: It is late, too late perhaps to write about Christmas, yet we want you to know what a pleasant time our Sunday school at Mt. Gilead had on Christmas eve and in telling you will explain why we are so tardy with our report: The exercises consisting of essays and addresses interspersed with singing, were well suited to the occasion and highly enjoyed by all present. After this came the distribution of the presents, in which we are pleased to say pastor and wife were not forgotten. The chief feature of our festival however, the decoration of the church. But a poor conception can be formed from any written description. One of our artists was so well pleased with it that he solicited and obtained permission to take a photograph of it. That you may see what a beautiful picture it makes we enclose you a copy, and it was that we might do this, that caused the delay in writing. *F. E.*

ILLINOIS.

—An account of the anniversary celebration of the U. S. S. of Charlestown, we presume would be of some interest to the readers of the MYRTLE; and with your kind permission we will give a brief note of the affair. The anniversary of the U. S. S. was celebrated on New Years eve with the usual festivities. Singing, recitations, &c., by the little ones, being the programme for the evening exercises. The church was beautifully decorated by the skillful hands of the young ladies, and was full to overflowing. After the exercises, the eatables, delicacies &c, prepared by the young lady members of the Sabbath School were distributed among all present and partaken of freely. It was pronounced by all present the grandest affair of the kind ever given in the place. Our School has been steadily increasing since its organization, having for the past year an average attendance of seventy-one, and it is our intention to make the average attendance for this year greater, by at least twenty per cent and have one of the most interesting schools in the city; to this end we work. Under the officient management of Bro. Jos. Griffith and his daughter Ida, who is our Sabbath School organist, the singing of our school can not be surpassed by any Sabbath School in the country. *C. L. B.*

Lives of the Apostles.

LESSON XLVI.—PAUL.

Question. — After Paul had left Ephesus and travelled back over his route through Macedonia and Greece, at what city did he arrive?

Answer. — Acts xx. 6.

Q. — How many brethren accompanied him into Asia?

A. — Acts xx. 4.

NOTE. Luke seems to have been left in Phillippi during the years of Paul's labors in Corinth, Ephesus and other places, until the Apostle's return to that city. In the history of those years, St. Luke writes in the third person; but now he uses the first person, and says, "They tarried for *us*."

Q. — To what place did the brethren go before Paul and Luke?

A. — Acts xx. 5.

Q. — What did St. Paul do for the believers at Troas?

A. — Acts xx. 7.

Q. — In what way did Paul go from Troas to Assos?

A. — Acts xx. 13.

Q. — How did Luke and the other brethren go?

A. — Acts xx. 13.

Q. — After taking St. Paul on board at Assos, what port was reached by the Missionaries?

A. — Acts xx. 15.

Q. — Who came to Miletus, at St. Paul's request?

A. — Acts xx. 17, 18.

Q. — After stating how faithful he had been in Ephesus, what charge did he give the elders?

A. — Acts xx. 28.

Q. — What did the the Apostles mention as the danger of the church?

A. — Acts xx. 29, 30.

Q. — What virtue did he especially charge them to practice?

A. — Acts xx. 35.

Q. — What fear had he expressed to them concerning himself?

A. — Acts xx. 22, 23.

Q. — What did he say of their meeting again?

A. — Acts xx. 25.

Q. — After Paul had counselled them, what did he do?

A. — Acts xx. 36.

Q. — What did they do to the Apostle?

A. — Acts xx. 37.

Q. — Why did they weep in sorrow?

A. — Acts xx. 38.

Q. — What did the Elders do at the close of this interview?

A. — Acts xx. 38.

Hidden Seed

Enigma No. 1.

Within my name when I am found,
Two syllables there are;
My first descends upon the ground,
And is a blessing rare.

My second is by hunters bent,
A beautiful curved line;
My whole, of God's own covenant,
A signet, or a sign.

Enigma. No. 2.

Though small I am, yet when entire,
I have force enough to set a house on fire;
Take off one letter, and it is clear
I can contain whole herds of deer;
Dismiss another, and you'll find
I once contained all human kind.

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